

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. – 10. (Canceled)
11. (Original) A method for forming a material for plugging a well comprising
 - a. obtaining a feedstock comprising bentonite in admixture with a proportion of water to permit the formation of compacted nodules having a density of at least 2.0 g/cm^3 and a mean particle survival at a crush force of at least 800 newtons and capable of having at least 50% survival when dropped 1.5 meters onto a concrete surface,
 - b. feeding the feedstock under pressure to a continuous roll press machine under conditions to permit the formation of said compacted nodules and
 - c. recovering the compacted nodules.
12. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the feedstock comprises from about 35% to about 98% by weight bentonite, from about 0% to about 45% by weight nonbentonite solids, and from about 2% to about 20% by weight nonconnate water.
13. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the feedstock comprises from about 45% to about 95% by weight bentonite, from about 0% to about 35% by weight nonbentonite solids, and from about 5% to about 20% by weight nonconnate water.
14. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the feedstock comprises from about 64% to about 88% by weight bentonite, from about 0% to about 20% by weight nonbentonite solids, and from about 12% to about 16% by weight nonconnate water.

15. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the feedstock consists essentially of from about 85% to about 90% by weight bentonite and from about 10% to about 15% by weight nonconnate water.
16. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the pressure is a pressure of at least about 1 Mpa.
17. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the pressure is a pressure of at least about 3 Mpa.
18. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the pressure is a pressure of at least about 5 Mpa.
19. (Canceled)
20. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein said roller press is operated at a speed of from about 2 RPM to about 50 RPM.
21. – 33. (Canceled)